

It was the biggest hair drier in the world. And they weren't afraid to use it...



## THE TIME MACHINE

### BUY IT FOR...

- ☐ THE MIND-BENDING IMAGERY.
- ☐ THE UBER-MORLOCK'S GIANT, BULGING BRAIN.
- ☐ AUSSIE GUY PEARCE STEALING THE SHOW.

### DETAILS

ON SALE SEPTEMBER 16

RATING M15+

YEAR 2002

DIRECTOR SIMON WELLS

STARRING GUY PEARCE, ORLANDO JONES, SAMANTHA MUMBA, JEREMY IRONS, MARK ADDY, PHYLLIDA LAW, LAURA KIRK, JOSH STAMBERG

PICTURE 2.35:1 ANAMORPHIC WIDESCREEN

SOUND DOLBY DIGITAL 5.1

### THE FILM

#### THIS REMAKE OF THE 1960 ORIGINAL BRINGS THE LATEST IN

special effects to bear on a sci-fi classic. This movie is the story of a late 19th century gentleman who builds a time machine and explores the distant future to find out the ultimate fate of Mankind. He

discovers a civilisation far removed from today's, where two human races have evolved. The Eloi live a blissful existence on the Earth's surface, while beneath their feet the twisted Morlocks work their foul machines, hunting the naïve surface dwellers for food.

The novel by H. G. Wells was a statement about class based society as much as a work of speculative fiction. Not that you'd know it from this movie, scripted and directed by Wells' great-grandson, the political overtones have been brushed aside in this new version, reducing it to a vacuous Hollywood blockbuster. The nightmare future world

is explained away by a nuclear mishap on the moon, with the rightful order of American hegemony preposterously restored at the very end.

### DID YOU KNOW?

H.G. Wells is not only the father of science fiction, but the father of rock opera. For if he didn't write *The War of the Worlds*, then Jeff Wayne couldn't compose the musical, now could he?

While the movie isn't particularly believable, it is intermittently entertaining. Guy Pearce is excellent in the role of Alexander Hartegen, the bereaved professor who builds the time machine in

an effort to go back in time and save his fiancée. He staggers around like a convincingly stunned mullet, in stark contrast to the American non-actors around him. Jeremy Irons is brilliant as the bulging-brained Uber-Morlock, even though his role is confined to a few minutes near the end. The only other character of interest is the time machine itself, a resplendent prop that took 20 people over three months to build. This gleaming, brassy machine is the best looking time machine to grace DVD since the TARDIS.

The acting of Irons and Pearce is without fault, but not great enough to

overshadow the movie's flaws. The script is preposterous, a meandering, over-simplified mess with an illogical, timid ending. The production design varies from the garish to the downright silly. Laws of physics and common sense are broken willy-nilly. Worst of all is the over reliance on special effects, which only serves to make vast tracts of the movie look fake.

If only it didn't take itself so seriously, this could have been a fine B-movie. Problem is, all the B-movies think they're A-movies these days, to the extent that there's not enough irony to go around. If you've run out of comedies to rent, then *The Time Machine* could afford you and some drunken friends a couple of hours distraction. Just be ready for the inevitable consequences of hurling everything within arms reach at the screen.

### THE DISCS

■ **PICTURE** The imaginative design work is well served by the rich anamorphic transfer.

■ **SOUND** A handful of action scenes



Nature had been cruel to the Eloi.



When welding goes wrong

utilise the surround sound. The rest of the film is covered in a soppy score.

■ **COMMENTARIES** Not bad, these. The first is narrated by the tag-team of Simon Wells and film editor Wayne Wahrman. They provide a candid and entertaining insight into the technical challenges they faced. For instance, the Stanley Steamer, the early motor car depicted, was actually almost silent to run. They had to add sound effects to make it sound more of a cantankerous machine. The attention to detail was phenomenal; key actors went to voice coaches to get their turn of the century accents down pat. Despite the resources available, mistakes were still made. Like the decision to make the Eloi village on the side of a giant styro-foam cliff face. Wells' hindsight is flawless - "Things I

have learned on this movie: Do not try to shoot a dialogue scene 40 foot up a cliff face." Believe it or not, but they actually spent months trimming away at the final cut, removing scenes deemed redundant.

The second track is by producer David Valdez, visual effects supervisor James Price and production designer Oliver Scholl. They further flesh-out the laborious task of film-making.

By far the greatest effort in this movie went into devising the look and feel of the

environments and monsters. Here all about pouring latex Morlock heads with these two tracks.

■ **FEATURETTES** Four fairly brief behind-the-scenes documentaries (see Feature Focus).

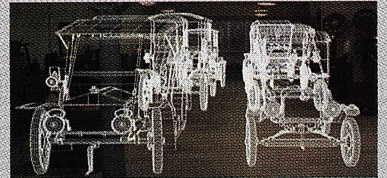
■ **HUNT SEQUENCE ANIMATIC** Story-

## DID YOU KNOW?

■ Guy Pearce broke a rib while making *The Time Machine*. He insisted on doing all his own stunts, and that included tackling a brutish Morlock.

## FEATURETTES

■ These documentaries are short, but to the point. 'Creating The Morlocks' explores how Simon Wells' character designs evolved into latex suits for the stunt men to wear. 'Building the Time Machine' looks at the nuts and bolts behind building one of the most elaborate film props ever conceived. 'Visual Effects' covers the specialised computer software used to age the planet in super fast-forward. Finally, 'Stunt Choreography' has two stunt men acting out the final fight between Pearce and Irons' characters. All four documentaries laid end-to-end don't stretch more than 20 minutes, but they give you plenty to chew on.



## ↑ FEATURE FOCUS



He was the staring competition champion.

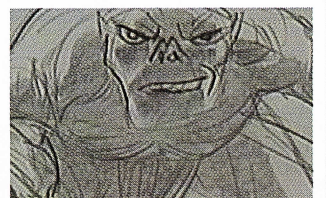
boards at their most dynamic (see Feature Focus).

### ■ PRODUCTION DESIGN GALLERY

Around a dozen of the fascinating design drawings used to plan out future New York, the Eloi village, and so forth. In a bizarre move, all these images are presented in a tiny window at the centre of the screen, greatly diminishing their discernable details.

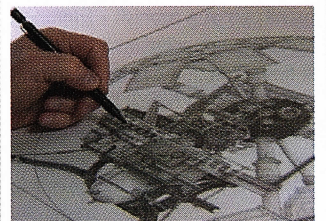
■ **DELETED SCENE** This scene adds a great deal to the story. As Alexander conducts his university class outside in the freezing cold to prove a point, Dean Fulton (staid 19th century professor) interrupts. Since it dealt with character development and hard science, it was expunged from the final version.

**JAMES COTTEE**



### ■ Hunt Sequence Animatic

This is a sophisticated story-board interpretation of the Morlocks hunting the Eloi, as originally envisioned by Simon Wells. His drawings emote the tension and the panic of the scene far better than the finished product did. Here the Morlocks are calculating,



willful predators, rather than some guys in monkey costumes who can run fast. One is left wondering why the entire film wasn't made as an animated feature - it would have looked a lot better that way.

## IS IT WORTH IT?

Not really. The superlative actors and source material are squandered on a banal script. The extras are like a documentary about a train wreck. Rent it for a laugh, or just buy the book.



## ↑ FEATURE FOCUS